

member of the Security Lioness Club, a lifetime VFW member, and a member of the School District #3 Advisory Board long-range task force. She is also an active member of the Optimists Club and has served on the El Paso County Planning Commission. In addition to her humanitarian endeavors, Mary Ellen is the proud mother of three daughters, Marsha Epps, Kelly Hromas and Heather Segura.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Mary Ellen Epps is a woman of dedication and commitment to her state and its citizens. I am honored to be able to bring her hard work and dedication to the attention of this body of Congress, and to this nation. Thank you, Mary Ellen, for all of your hard work, and I wish you all the best in the future.

#### HONORING THE GENESEE VALLEY ROTARY CLUB

**HON. DALE E. KILDEE**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 7, 2002*

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the Genesee Valley Rotary Club on celebrating its 25th anniversary. The Rotary Club will celebrate its anniversary with a special event on May 14.

The Genesee Valley Rotary Club began as a provisional club in March of 1977, through the support of Jack Hamady, Ray Kelley and Jerry Wittemore. The Genesee Valley Rotary Club grew so rapidly through community support that by May of 1977 the Rotary was given a charter at the district conference that was held in Port Huron. Over the past 25 years the Rotary Club has conducted one major fundraiser a year giving the proceeds to local or international projects that they believe give back to the community. In addition to this the members conduct various community projects throughout the year. Many of them work for the Salvation Army Christmas bell ringing campaign, others answer phones for telethons, and some work during the Big Brothers/Big Sisters bowling challenge.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the Genesee Valley Rotary Club on celebrating its 25th anniversary. As a Rotary Club scholarship beneficiary I can attest to the unwavering support they give to the community. I applaud their involvement in the Flint area for the past quarter century.

#### HONORING THE DEDICATION OF THE ALVIRDA HYMAN LEARNING CENTER IN FREMONT, CA

**HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 7, 2002*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the grand opening of the Alvirda Hyman Learning Center, an innovative new alternative learning facility donated by the Fremont Bank to the Fremont Unified School District in honor of Alvirda Hyman's dedication to continuing education.

Alvirda Hyman is a living testimony to the power of lifelong learning and a role model for her commitment to community service. Throughout her adult life, Mrs. Hyman has been a strong supporter of education for students from preschool through adulthood.

It was her support of her husband, Morris, in continuing his education that sewed the seeds of a career change that led to the founding of Fremont Bank in the early 1960s. Now one of the most successful family-owned businesses in the Bay Area, the Fremont Bank's 21 branches are a tribute to continuing education's ability to transform individual lives and improve communities.

Likewise, the Alvirda Hyman Learning Center, which represents one of the most generous corporate contributions in the history of the Fremont Unified School District, is the ideal tribute to Mrs. Hyman's dedication to education. When Fremont Bank consolidated its support facilities, a 12,000 square-foot modular building became vacated and available for donation. The bank donated the building to the school district for use as instructional space.

The new facility allows the Fremont Unified School District to provide tremendously improved space for several alternative education programs. It provides the Circle of Independent Learning Charter School a permanent home; it provides the Adult School Parent Education Program space designed specifically for its unique needs; and it gives the State Pre-School Program a permanent classroom within the district.

As part of a full community effort, the building was moved in 20 sections to the Mowry Adult School site. Re-construction began in August 2001, and has resulted in a beautiful new facility designed especially to serve the individual needs of the alternative learning programs housed there. The commercial structure was re-designed into an attractive and functional learning environment, complete with a playground and activity areas. The 20 separate modular units were recombined into a structurally coherent and aesthetically stunning building.

I am honored to congratulate Alvirda Hyman for her remarkable belief in the power and importance of lifelong learning. Her dedication to improving education has assured every citizen of Fremont the opportunity for a bright future, filled with ongoing education.

#### H.R. 4231—SMALL BUSINESS ADVOCACY IMPROVEMENT ACT

**HON. TOM UDALL**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 7, 2002*

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in strong support of H.R. 4231, the Small Business Advocacy Improvement Act. Created in 1976 by Congress, the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of Advocacy's primary mission is to protect, strengthen and effectively represent small businesses within the Federal government's legislative and rule-making process. The Office of Advocacy works to reduce the burdens that Federal government policies impose on small business and encourage policies that support the development and growth of American small business.

However, the Office of Advocacy is forced each year to negotiate with OMB and the Administration on the provisions in its budget. In order for the Office of Advocacy to strengthen its voice and credibility for small businesses, it must be independent of any undue interference or influence that might hinder its ability to speak out objectively on behalf of small businesses.

To that end, H.R. 4231 requires that Advocacy's budget request be included in the President's budget submission to Congress each fiscal year without being changed. This will give the Office of Advocacy greatly increased fiscal independence from the Administration and will allow Advocacy to stay true to its core mission of providing support to small businesses and entrepreneurs.

In addition, continuation of service for the SBA Chief Counsel for Advocacy, unlimited authorization for the Office of Advocacy, and replacing the "minority enterprises" terminology to include women owned businesses and veteran businesses in the primary functions of the Office of Advocacy are also important provisions included in H.R. 4231.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation and help improve the support provided to our nation's small businesses by the SBA's Office of Advocacy. Vote "yes" on H.R. 4231.

#### THE SOCIAL SECURITY WIDOW'S BENEFIT GUARANTEE ACT OF 2002

**HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 7, 2002*

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, today I am offering a bill to make long overdue improvements in Social Security benefits. My bill would provide higher benefits for an estimated 5 million widows and other elderly beneficiaries. At the same time, it maintains fiscal responsibility by assuring that the bill does not affect the financial solvency of the Social Security system.

Elderly non-married women, including widows, rely heavily on Social Security benefits. Three out of four depend on it for at least half of their total income. And four in 10 depend on it for 90 percent or more of their income.

At the same time, widows are among the poorest of all Social Security beneficiaries. Over the last 30 years, poverty rates among the elderly have fallen from 29 percent in 1966 to 8.5 percent in 2000. But among widows, the poverty rate remains high—at 15 percent in 2000. The incomes of elderly women are very modest. The median income for non-married elderly women, including widows, was about \$12,000 a year in 2000.

The time to address this situation is now. Republicans want to spend trillions of dollars to privatize Social Security, and they want to wait until after the election to do it. Democrats are proposing to invest less than one-twentieth of that amount to improve benefits for the neediest beneficiaries, and we want to do it now, without delay. Democrats want to improve Social Security and help its neediest beneficiaries, rather than destroy it by risky privatization schemes that require trillions of new dollars and deep benefit cuts.

BILL SUMMARY

The bill would create a new "widow's guarantee" for Social Security beneficiaries. Widows and widowers would be guaranteed a